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Congressional Report

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Representative, Seventh District

There is a universal consensus that war is hell. Unquestionably a moral issue has to be resolved by young men confronting the Vietnamese war, whether in the armed forces or in the multitudinous back-up services, such as intelligence or the manufacture of napalm.

But as everybody knows—at least among freedom-loving citizens—a moral issue, by its very nature, is a profoundly personal matter. Since men are free, they are responsible; and what responsibility requires of an individual is for the individual alone in conscience to decide. A decision so reached, however wrong-headed, is entitled to respect, if not always to amnesty.

Defense manufacturers and federal agencies (such as the Central Intelligence Agency) now recruiting personnel on college campuses obviously are acting on the assumption that the young men invited to join their staffs are free, responsible, and capable of deciding what responsibility entails—and thus able to decide for themselves whether to take proffered jobs or to reject them.

This assumption by the recruiters, however, is not shared by the peace militants among various student bodies. Having reached a conclusion of their own (or otherwise) about war, about napalm, about communism and anti-communism, about Asian nationalism and American patriotism, about the President and possible alternatives thereto, they want and obviously are determined to impose their conclusions on their neighbors.

So we have the spectacle, on campus after campus, of these militants holding the recruiters prisoner, muscling them and their prospects away from college-assigned conference rooms and, by every possible trick and device, trying to prevent the wholly voluntary give-and-take of recruiting conferences.

These militants have, of course, the same right as any American to dissent—but there is a difference between dissent and obstructionism, a difference between dissent and defiant resistance of constituted authority, and a difference between dissent and deliberate violation of law.

But all of these dissenting groups have engaged in one or more, and frequently all, of these activities which are not dissent but rather improper and frequently illegal behavior.

The tragedy of this is the warped mentalities which do not enable the dissenters to recognize the difference between dissent and improper obstructionism of and resistance to constituted authority, and the difference between dissent and violation of law.

The dissenters constitute a tiny minority of the American people and, on the campuses, only a very small minority of the total student population. They trumpet loudly their right (and they do have it) to dissent from the majority.

But they are so blind to reality, if indeed not so stupid that they cannot recognize reality, that they do not recognize that they have gone beyond dissent and are actually engaging in obstruction of the right of the overwhelming majority to dissent from the views of this tiny minority. They disgrace themselves, not their nation.